

UMSL sweeps 'Dogs in doubleheader

BY BRENDAN O'BRIEN
Staff Reporter

After it dropped four of six games in Florida during Midterm Break and was swept in a doubleheader by the University of Missouri-St. Louis, the softball team limps into the upcoming weekend with a 7-11 record.

Just as it was an issue last season, the 'Dogs have struggled recently at the plate. In its two games against UMSL, the team managed only seven hits and one run. Throughout the season, the team has put up less than 2.8 runs per game, which has added pressure to the pitching rotation.

Senior pitcher Richelle van Gennip had her year's worst outing as she gave up five earned runs in six innings during Game 1 against UMSL, a 6-1 loss. In the nightcap, junior pitcher Beth Schnurbusch gave up two earned runs during the course of six innings, but the offense was silenced and the Bulldogs were dealt a 2-0 loss. Senior outfielder Erica LaCombe said the team needs to be better about not leaving runners stranded, but that the lineup has shown signs of life.

"We expected them to hit the ball, so we failed as a team to put runs on the

board," LaCombe said. "I think we hit well, we just need to string the hits together and make something happen by finding a hole."

The UMSL doubleheader was the team's first time playing since March 9 in Kissimmee, Fla. The 'Dogs went 2-4 and were outscored 16-15 before their final four games were rained out. The team recorded one shutout against Southwest Minnesota State University, 9-0, but also was shut out three times. The team had base runners but could not bring them home as they

left 39 runners on base in the six-game stretch.

Van Gennip served as one bright spot for the Bulldogs on the trip. She earned a share of the MIAA Softball Pitcher of the Week for allowing just one earned run over the course of 21.1 innings in four games.

Van Gennip has struck out 97 batters in 12 appearances this season, as compared to 87 strikeouts in 27 games last year. On the offensive side, junior shortstop Alex Weber and freshman catcher Christine Ulises both had two multi-hit games. Head coach Erin Brown said van Gennip's performance on the mound helps hitters relax at the plate.

"I think it just gives them a lot of confidence in her, and

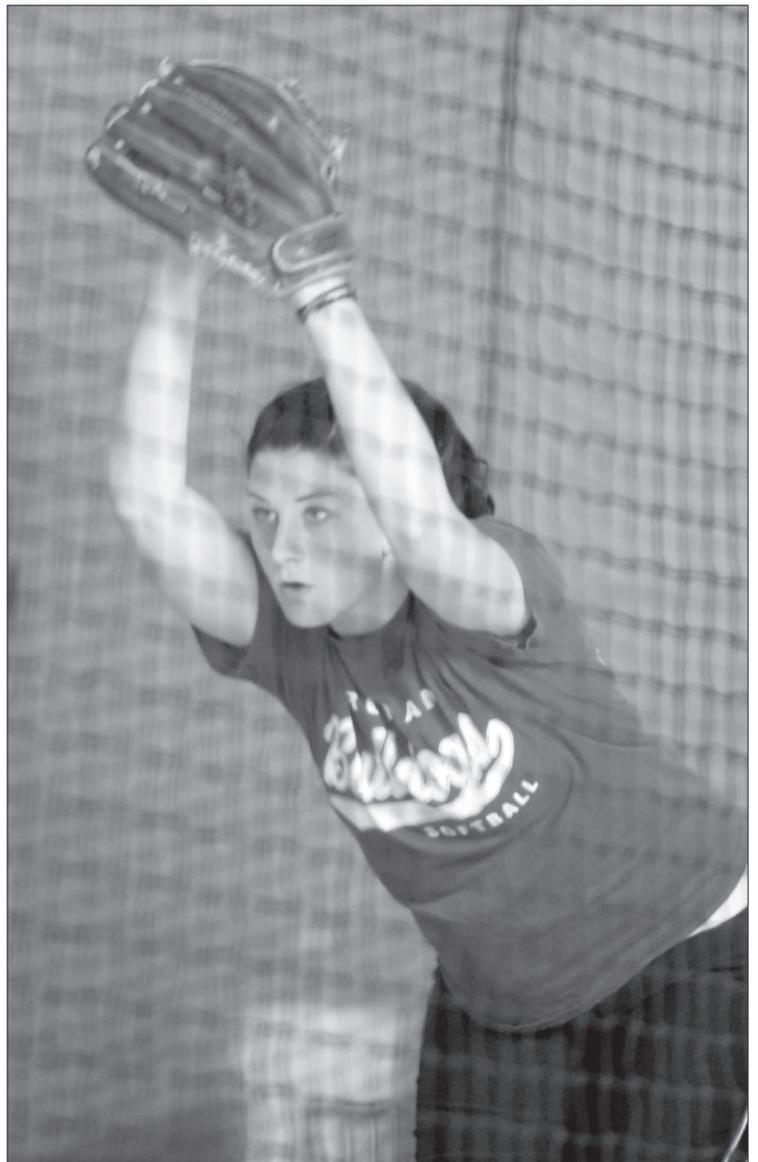
what they then focus on is just doing their job up at the plate and getting some run production for her and all their pitchers," Brown said. "Whenever [the pitchers are] having a lot of success, that kind of lets the kids shift focus a little more on hitting and getting some runs across the board to give them a little more insurance."

The 'Dogs will attempt to rebound from their current 3-9 stretch when they head to Warrensburg, Mo., on Friday. The team will take on five conference foes in the two days at the MIAA Crossover Tournament, but none will count toward the overall conference record. Weber said this weekend will be important to the team's success the remainder of the year.

"We've had a lot of practices, so we've been prepared," Weber said. "I think that these upcoming couple games are going to be big for us, this weekend for the Crossover against several conference teams. I think we're going to do well."

One of the five games will be against Washburn University, which will be a precursor to Truman's home conference doubleheader against the Lady Blues on Sunday. LaCombe said the Bulldogs are ready for the test.

"I think that we are ready to go," LaCombe said. "I think we just need to fine-tune a few things — get back on a winning track. The team has confidence and we just need to push ourselves over the hump."



Senior pitcher Richelle van Gennip continued her success in Florida during Midterm Break but gave up a season-high five earned runs at UMSL on Tuesday.

"We just need to string the hits together and make something happen by finding a hole."

Erica LaCombe
Senior Outfielder

'Dogs lose three of four at Ichabods

BY LOGAN JACKSON
Staff Reporter

Sophomore Ryan Trimble continues to control the mound for the Bulldogs. Trimble moved to 3-0 as Truman took one of four against Washburn University last weekend.

The 'Dogs won the third game of the series behind Trimble's complete game, 10-2. He pitched seven innings and gave up five hits and two runs and had six strikeouts. Trimble has three of the four Bulldog (4-12, 1-7 MIAA) wins.

"At the beginning of the game I struggled finding my release point and the strike zone," Trimble said. "I was able to battle through the first two innings. After that, I mixed up my pitches better and was able to locate better."

The Bulldog offense had 12 hits and had seven players with a hit and four players with two RBIs in the game. Junior second baseman Luke Crader was 3-for-4 with two RBIs and sophomore catcher Pete Jurich was 3-for-4 with an RBI.

The Bulldogs struggled in the other three games of the series. A few bad innings in each game allowed Washburn to come out with three wins. Washburn scored 28 runs during the weekend. However, the Ichabods only scored in 11 innings.

"Overall, it was a little disappointing," Trimble said. "We were competitive in three out of the four



Sophomore shortstop Steven Rose looks for an out during a game earlier this season. Rose had six hits in 15 at-bats against Washburn last weekend. The Bulldogs won one of four games.

games. We lost the first game in the last inning. In the last game, the box score looks out-of-hand, but it was a tight game going into the seventh inning. We played well but have to get over the hump."

In the first game, the Bulldogs fell behind early but tied the game in the fifth inning. Truman had six hits in the inning and scored five

runs.

However, Washburn pushed home a run in the bottom of the seventh to earn the 8-7 win. Sophomore Tyler Stefan took the loss for the Bulldogs. He hit a Washburn player in the bottom of the seventh who later scored the winning run on a single. Senior outfielder Keaton Jones said the team showed

character by coming back, but it needs to work on not creating those situations.

"Those games are always tough," Jones said. "We were down early and fought hard to get back in it and tie it up. To lose on a walk-off like that is hard. We have to get over it though, because we didn't come out and play very well in the next game."

Truman couldn't put anything together in the second game of the series and lost 7-1. Junior Michael Stairh was tagged with the loss. He threw five innings and gave up six hits and five runs, none of which were earned.

Washburn scored five runs in the first. Stairh had a wild pitch and hit a batter in the inning and the Bulldog defense committed an error.

In the final game of the series Monday, both teams battled but Washburn won, 11-4. Freshman Jarrett Eiskina started his first game of the season and pitched six innings and gave up four hits and one run. He also had 10 strikeouts in the game.

The Bulldog bullpen couldn't keep the game close, however, and gave up 10 runs on nine hits in just two innings. Washburn scored seven runs in the seventh inning and added three in the eighth. Head coach Dan Davis said Eiskina looked great in his first collegiate start, but the bullpen couldn't keep the game close.

"Unfortunately, we wasted a great outing from freshman Jarrett Eiskina," Davis said. "He was on a pitch count, obviously, and that was the most he's thrown all year. As soon as we took him out, our bullpen did not do a very good job."

The Bulldog offense scored 22 runs during the series and batted nearly .300 as a team. However, the 'Dogs struggled with runners on base. The team left 37 runners on base in the four games. Davis said the offense has to work on its situational hitting.

"We're going back to the basics," Davis said. "We have to work on the small things that win ball games. Moving runners up, finding a way to put the ball in play with runners on third and less than two outs and having good at-bats are all important."

Truman will play its fifth straight road series this weekend against the University of Nebraska-Omaha. The four-game series will make it 20 straight road games for the Bulldogs. Davis said the weather and rescheduling has been tough on the team.

"The guys maybe sleep three nights a week in their own bed," Davis said. "Playing on the road so much is weighing on them. The weather has also forced us to practice inside, which means they have to come in at 5:20 a.m. That schedule is weighing on me, so I know it's weighing on them."

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